

Press Release from Amy Mason, Board Chair SPCFPD

01/14/14

This is a difficult time for everyone. The board recognizes that friends of former Chief Simpson are upset because their friend lost his job; we also understand that from their perspective, it may have seemed that he was doing a good job. Only the members of the board and Mr. Simpson are privy to ALL the facts. While the board continues to be unable to discuss all of the personnel issues that were involved, we can comment on items of public record. Many of the board's issues with Mr. Simpson from July through December were discussed in public meetings. The minutes of those meetings are public records and can be found on the District's website: www.guffeyfire.net.

One of the board's major concerns has been the deteriorating nature of our relationship with several mutual aid agencies. These agencies are critical to our ability as a small, rural district to provide adequate emergency services to the members of our community. The problem began in July of 2013, when the board was made aware of some concerns those agencies had. Under Simpson's watch, little or no progress was made in repairing those relationships or in addressing the District's response needs. On December 10th, at a public meeting of one of those agencies, in front of their board and others in attendance, Simpson exacerbated the problem by laying the blame on his volunteer responders. It was an awkward and embarrassing moment.

Obviously, many other problems entered into our decision; several were addressed in open meetings and can be found in the meeting minutes. The board took many factors into account and this was not a decision that was made lightly. Despite the vocal opposition of those who do not have all the facts, we continue to believe that we made the best decision for the future of the department and the good of the members of the District, their friends, family and those visitors just passing through.

On a positive note, under the current leadership of Acting Chief Aaron Mandel, and with the help and renewed cooperation of many of those agencies, we have begun to make some headway in improving our response capabilities and in repairing and improving our interactions with our mutual aid partners.

We are dedicated to serving the best interests of our entire District and we will continue to reach out to everyone in our community. We hope that everyone will be willing to listen impartially and come to their own informed conclusions based on the public facts that are available to them.